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THE ENGLISH BRANCH

*549*

OF

*G.T.S.*

*Nov. 2/65*

THE UNITED STATES  
SANITARY COMMISSION.

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THE MOTIVE OF ITS ESTABLISHMENT,

AND

THE RESULT OF ITS WORK.

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BY

EDMUND CRISP FISHER,

AGENT OF THE UNITED STATES SANITARY COMMISSION IN ENGLAND.

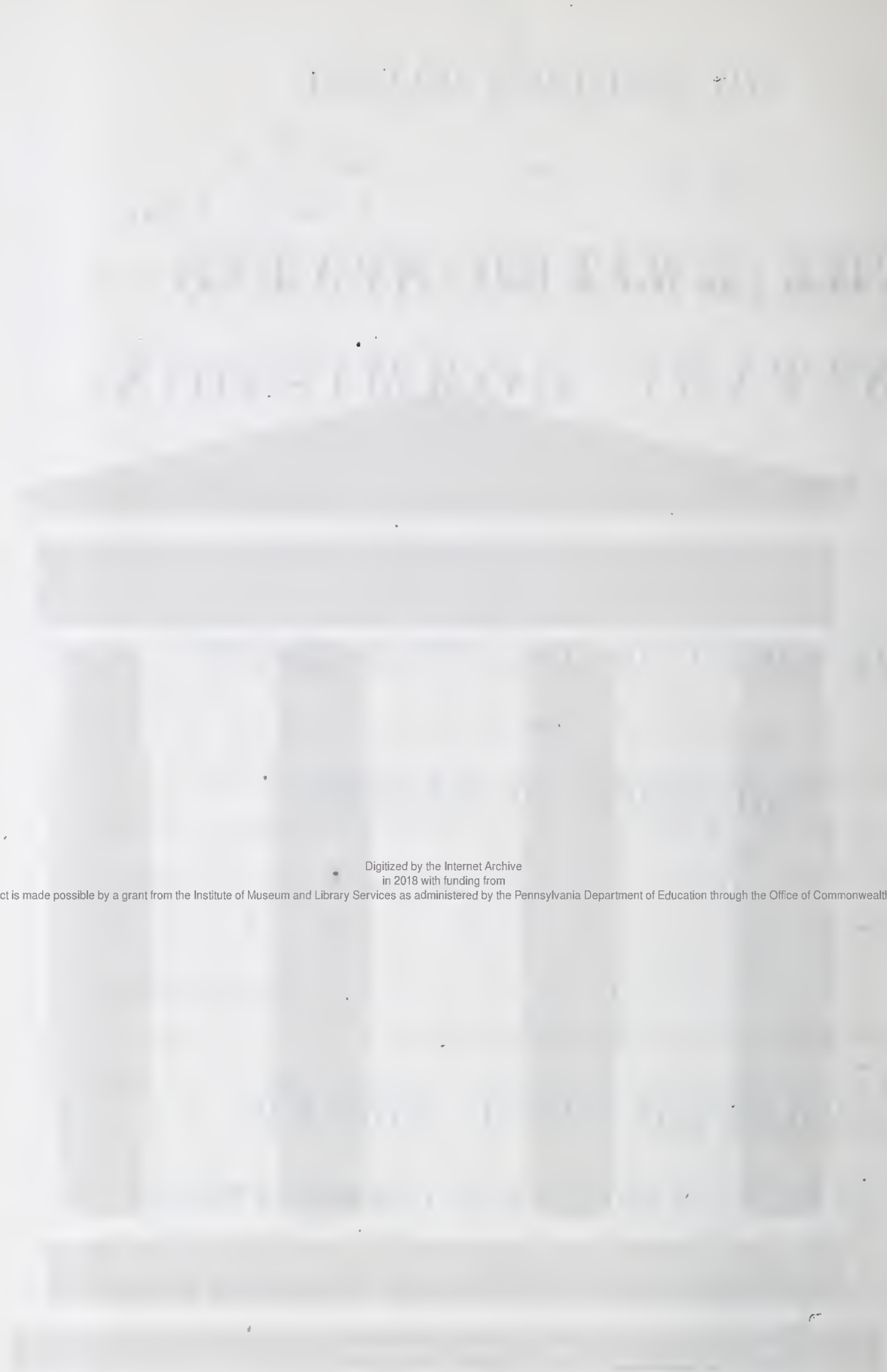
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LONDON:

WILLIAM RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY.

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1865.



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551

PURPOSE AND WORK OF THE ENGLISH BRANCH  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES SANITARY COMMISSION.

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THE alarming proportions assumed by the rebellion of several of the Southern States of the American Union against the Federal authority, at the period of Abraham Lincoln's election to the Presidency, and the enormous bodies of volunteers quitting the certainties and comforts of civil life for the unknown trials of military campaigning, awakened the patriotic millions of the North to the pressing duty of providing for the sanitary well-being of their fathers, sons, and brothers in the field. The establishment of the United States Sanitary Commission at the very commencement of the civil war, proved that the American people were fully alive to the imminence of the crisis and that they were earnestly determined to aid their Government in preserving the unity of the Republic, by rendering its armies healthy, contented and efficient. Future historians will be forced to admit that, however enlightened were



the statesmen of the Republic during the four years' furnace-trial, the citizens themselves were in advance of them in self-denying exertion ; and that notwithstanding the ability of the Northern Generals, and the efficiency of the various military bureaux, the supplementary work of such organizations as the Sanitary Commission, strengthened the hands of the Executive, to an extent hitherto unknown in the records of nations.

The national enthusiasm was not limited to the Western Continent, for the wave of patriotic devotion soon rolled across the Atlantic, and stirred up Americans in Europe to like exertions with their compatriots at home. A meeting of American residents and visitors in Paris, was held at the United States consulate in that city, on the 30th November, 1863 ; and an organization was then established, which has since been known as " The European Branch of the United States Sanitary Commission." This branch agency has performed valuable labour in behalf of the American armies in the field, by collecting subscriptions, hospital supplies, and delicacies from the benevolent, and forwarding them to the New World ; and, in addition, by spreading abroad throughout the continent of Europe, precise and trustworthy information as to the operations and efficiency of the various charitable associations, supplementing the military arm of the Government.

Moved by the example of their brethren in

America, and satisfied of the possibility of their own success by the encouraging progress of the Paris organization, American residents in London resolved to establish a similar branch in the English capital. After the necessary preliminary discussion of arrangements, a meeting was convened at the London Tavern, on the 3rd of March, 1864. The Hon. William M. Evarts, then on a visit to Europe, occupied the chair; and most of the prominent Americans in London lent their presence and countenance to the proceedings. The *Morning Star* of the next day reported Mr. Evart's speech as follows:—

“The Chairman said he had great pleasure in taking any part in aid of the organization now to be commenced. He hoped it would be the means of assisting the great Sanitary Commission of the United States, and that it would take an important share in its benevolent and charitable labours. The object of the meeting, as they no doubt were made aware, through the notices that had been circulated, was, the establishment of an auxiliary amongst the Americans of the United Kingdom, so that by concentrated efforts they might take part in the charitable work of alleviating the wants and sufferings of their wounded, sick and dying brethren in America. There was no other claim to its bounty, and to its services, than the misfortunes of the recipients, making no distinction between friend and foe, in the administration of its aids. It was natural that the Americans of the United Kingdom should feel a deep interest in such a movement, and that they should not alone continue the assistance they had heretofore given as private individuals, but, that they should also desire to make a combined effort to swell the contributions in aid of this important and continued need. To establish an organization for the effecting of that combined effort, was the object of the meeting.”



Mr. Stevens then moved,—“ That an organization of Americans in the United Kingdom be established, as an auxiliary to the United States Sanitary Commission, and that an Executive Committee be appointed, with power to fill vacancies and add to their number, to elect officers, appoint sub-committees, and to transact all business in aid of the Sanitary Commission.” This resolution was carried, and an Executive Committee was thereupon nominated, comprising the names of the leading American residents in the United Kingdom. The gentlemen thus nominated were invited to meet each other at the Palace Hotel, on Saturday evening, March 5th, when the following Officers and Standing Committee were appointed.

PRESIDENT. Joshua Bates, Esq.

VICE PRESIDENTS. Messrs. George Peabody, C. M. Lampson, and Alexander Duncan.

STANDING COMMITTEE. Messrs. C. M. Lampson, Russell Sturgis, J. S. Morgan, E. L. Z. Benzon, and Henry Stevens.

COMMITTEE ON SUBSCRIPTIONS. Messrs. Charles F. Dennett, Richard Hunting, Samuel M. Warren, John W. Ehringer, and J. Sella Martin.

TREASURER. Henry Starr, Esq.

SECRETARY, *pro tem.* Edmund C. Fisher, Esq.

BANKERS. Messrs. Baring, Bros. & Co. ; Messrs. George Peabody & Co. ; Messrs. Brown, Shipley & Co.

It will be seen from the above proceedings that

no intention was entertained by the founders of the English Branch of the United States Sanitary Commission to obtain funds or other aid from any but Americans. The gentlemen whose names sanctioned the movement, were sufficient guarantees that no such attempt could or would be made; but lest this fact should not be sufficiently emphasized, the supreme executive authority of the Commission laid down, at an early date, the course of action to be pursued by the newly-formed branch in London. The following letter from the Rev. Henry W. Bellows, D.D., President of the United States Sanitary Commission, is explicit upon the point in question, as well as upon all others which were likely to affect the action of the Anglo-American organization.

*Letter from the Rev. Dr. Bellows, President, to the United States Sanitary Committee in England.*

“New York, *March 24th*, 1864.

“H. Starr, Esq., Secretary, London.

“Dear Sir,—I have great pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of your favour of the 5th instant, inclosing the minutes of the recent meetings which have resulted in the organization of an auxiliary to the United States Sanitary Commission in the United Kingdom. The names of the gentlemen who attended the preliminary meetings, and of those ladies and gentlemen who form the Executive Committee, are so well and so favourably known here, as to give every guarantee that nothing they undertake can fail to succeed.

“We have been much impressed in our Commission with the discretion which has marked the inception of your undertaking, the carefulness with which local and national prejudices have been conciliated.



“The Commission desires to have your Branch an independent one, acting in co-operation with the Paris Branch, but with exclusive and distinct jurisdiction of its own affairs. The Paris Branch followed our wishes in sending over delegates, to move in our behalf in London, but we do not propose that the *general* relation it sustains to our *Continental* interests shall extend to Great Britain, which is large enough, and distinct enough, to constitute an independent field, requiring very special address for its proper tillage.

“The ostensible, and indeed, the *real* object of your Branch, should be to interest Americans in England, in the welfare of those fighting for our national integrity, and suffering from the sickness and the wounds contracted in that service. Our Commission it is true, never neglects to lend aid and comfort to the prisoners or the wounded of the enemy who fall within its reach, but we do not profess nor feel indifference in regard to friend and foe, but on the contrary, an intense zeal and devotion to the National cause. Many Englishmen, doubtless, might feel an interest in our cause, on grounds of *common humanity*, who would feel little or none, on moral or political grounds. We do not wish to repel *any* benevolent sympathy which may be turned to the account of the sick and wounded, but we feel that the National cause is even more sacred than that of mere humanity, and we desire to gain nothing in the name of humanity, at the cost of any serious misunderstanding of our position as earnest and devoted friends of our Government, in its present policy and struggle for integrity. Any material aid that might accrue from suppressing our sympathy with the objects of the war, would be a poor offset for the moral influence we should lose with the Army, the Nation and the World, by affecting apathy as to the issue involved in our struggle.

“We want the sympathy of England for the *Loyal Side* in this struggle, the side of Order, Liberty and Christian righteousness. The Sanitary Commission is intensely committed to this side of the question, and, without refusing it, cares little for any support from those not in sympathy with the hopes and purposes of the North.

“It is not, however, to be lost sight of, that prudence and



patience are to be exercised in the management of our interests.

We hope to win a more candid judgment and a better appreciation of the Northern side, by showing the English people what sacrifices our own people have made in the cause of the Army; how our men, and especially, how our women, have laboured to uphold the struggle, what enlightened care and mercy have been extended to the sick, and what extraordinary powers of accommodation and efficiency our popular institutions have shown, in meeting the vast demands of an army of over a million men, subject to the perils of a Southern climate, and to such a desperate foe.

“We flatter ourselves, that the history of the United States Sanitary Commission is itself a sort of vindication of Democratic Institutions, and throws a brilliant light upon American life and character. It is with pride and confidence we ask the attention of the British nation to our doings and our successes. They are unexampled in the history of human beneficence, and redound to the liberality, the good sense, and the organizing power of our common people.

“We are very anxious, moreover, that the practical solution we have given to the question how the Medical and Sanitary operations of Governments can be supplemented by popular aid and mercy, without perplexing or weakening the machinery of Government, should be brought before the English and all other Governments, and we hope your branch will take the utmost pains to circulate our documents. The cause of common humanity and of Sanitary Science will be greatly served, we trust, by the systematic experience gained in *our* operations.

“No doubt a large pecuniary contribution from English sources would promote good feeling between our respective nations. We cannot ask this in any spirit of importunity or even dependence. We are fully able to take care of our own sick and wounded, and have even refused to allow the Pacific Coast to assume *all* the burden it would gladly take upon itself in this office of mercy. So general is the confidence, the emulation and the effort aroused by our work, that we hope to be steadily provided by our own people with the means of carrying it on. We accept foreign assistance only in the name of a cosmopolitan sympathy, a philanthropic spirit, which we feel

bound to promote, as a common bond among Christians and men, the world over. It is specially grateful to us to see any effort making among the English in our behalf; for enlightened men here feel sadly the eclipse of good feeling which has come over our recent comity and kindliness. Good men cannot look upon the alienation growing up between England and America without great sorrow and anxiety—not so much for America's sake or even for England's sake, as for the sake of history and humanity themselves, both likely to be severely wounded in the terrible struggle which at this date must accompany a war between two nations so great, so proud, and so obstinate.

“If your Branch can, by arousing intelligent and humane men in England to consider the subject, make the United States Sanitary Commission an occasion for extending a conspicuous act of natural sympathy and beneficence, in a form unembarrassed by political considerations towards the American people, it will be of great service to the common interests of Civilization and Christianity.

“Be pleased to return to Mr. Adams, Mr. Evarts, Mr. Morse, Mr. Field, and other active and interested parties, the assurance of the very grateful estimation in which their services in this new movement are held by the United States Sanitary Commission, and by the people of America.

“I have to add, that I am compelled by patriotic and humane considerations to go to California for a few months, sailing the 4th of April, and that correspondence with your branch will be carried on in my absence by, or under the superintendence of, the general Secretary, Dr. J. Foster Jenkins.

“With high consideration and hearty thanks, I am very truly and respectfully yours,

“HENRY W. BELLOWS,

“*President United States Sanitary Commission.*”

Intelligence of the operations of the United States Sanitary Commission had reached Europe many months prior to any steps being taken in the Old World, in reference to auxiliary organizations, and much interest was excited in benevolent and



other circles to obtain reliable information upon the purpose and work of the Commission. Valuable aid had been offered by Englishmen and others in behalf of this great volunteer movement; aid which was warmly welcomed by those whose single aim was the benefit of suffering humanity. Mr. Cyrus W. Field, who had passed the winter of 1863-64 in this country, in connection with the Atlantic Telegraph Company, was, like many other Americans, closely questioned upon the objects of the Commission; and by means of the Society's documents, and his own knowledge of its achievements, he had produced a strong feeling of respect and admiration for its benevolent labours. Members of the British aristocracy, clergymen of all denominations, and well-known philanthropists had, of their own volition, collected and forwarded to the United States, valuable parcels of hospital clothing and other necessities; and the time seemed most propitious for the establishment of an English branch, when such gifts were made, in the name of humanity, as that tendered by Mr. Elliott, of the firm of Glass and Elliott, the eminent Telegraph Contractors. Mr. Elliott offered to Mr. Field, in behalf of the Commission, one thousand tons of coals, engaging to deliver them at any port designated for shipment, at his own expense; and numerous gentlemen endorsed this action by contributions in money or in kind. These contributions were all the more acceptable,

from the fact of their being unsought for and unexpected ; and as they were tendered on the broad base of goodwill to all men, they were immediately and gratefully received in behalf of the Commission.

The frequent references in the English press to the untiring labours of this volunteer organization, had induced the public to desire further information upon a matter which appealed to the heart and intellect alike. A little publication of some fifty pages, from the pen of an English writer, entitled "A Woman's Example, and a Nation's Work," had already been distributed throughout the kingdom ; and the favourable notice it received from the daily press, as well as from such influential periodicals as Mr. Dickens' *All the Year Round*, proved conclusively that the English people were ready to appreciate the struggles of Americans in behalf of suffering humanity. The little work above referred to, (very properly dedicated to Miss Florence Nightingale), was evidently designed to give, in a short and hurried manner, a *general* idea of the establishment, organization, purposes and achievements of the Sanitary Commission ; but it necessarily fell short of enlightening its readers to a sufficient extent, upon the magnitude of the work in question. The numerous and, in some instances, voluminous publications of the Commission were, as yet, unknown in Europe ; and the Executive Committee therefore resolved to scatter



the information in their possession broadcast over the land, so as to show to Englishmen that the requirements of Christian philanthropy were studiously regarded by their brethren in America.

At a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Commission, held in the city of New York, on the 17th day of June, 1864, it was resolved to appoint an agent in London, and to authorise him to open rooms on behalf of the Commission in the English capital. Mr. Edmund C. Fisher, the Secretary, *pro tem.*, of the newly established branch, was thereupon appointed Agent, a letter to that effect, —of which the following is a copy, being addressed to him by Dr. Jenkins, the General Secretary.

“E. C. Fisher, Esq.

“Sir,—I beg respectfully to submit to your notice the following resolution of the Standing Committee of the United States Sanitary Commission, and to inform you that I shall hold myself prepared to carry out the instructions of the English branch of the Commission of which you are a member.

‘*United States Sanitary Commission,*

‘823, *Broadway, New York,*

‘*June 17th, 1864.*

‘At a meeting of the Standing Committee of the United States Sanitary Commission held this day, it was voted that Mr. E. C. Fisher be recognised as the acting Secretary of the English branch of the Commission, and be appointed Agent of the Commission in England.’

‘*Voted*,—That Mr. Fisher be requested to secure an office for the Commission in London, and to engage a clerk when found necessary.’

“J. FOSTER JENKINS,

“*General Secretary.*”

The object of the Commission in thus establish-

ing an office in London was to give themselves, as it were, "a local habitation and a name" in the British metropolis, where Americans, resident or visiting, might meet each other, and from which the numerous statistical, medical, and other publications of the Association might be distributed. The far-sightedness of this determination will be admitted when the operations of the English Branch are fully known; operations which have given the people of Great Britain a more favourable opinion of the Northern cause than perhaps any other agency during the war.

The duly authorized Agent immediately proceeded to his duty by engaging the first floor of the house, No. 21, Cockspur Street, as the headquarters of the Commission in England. A reading-room was prepared with files of all the leading English and American papers; the valuable maps of the United States Coast Survey garnished the walls, and the publications of the Commission could be had *gratis* in any quantity. These preparations being completed, the Agent prepared the following circular, a copy of which he forwarded to every known American in the three kingdoms:—

" *United States Sanitary Commission, (English Branch),*

" *21, Cockspur Street, London, September 20th, 1864.*

" Sir,—You cannot but be aware of the noble work initiated and carried on by the Sanitary Commission in our country, for the philanthropy, energy, liberality and catholicity of the Commission have wrung high encomiums from the Press and



public men of Europe. Mr. John Stuart Mill, the first of English political economists, thus writes in reference to it:—

‘It would be unpardonable did I omit to express my warmest feelings of admiration for the Sanitary Commission. History has afforded no other example - though it is to be hoped that it will hereafter afford many—of so great a work of usefulness, extemporised by the spontaneous self devotion and organizing genius of a people, independent of the Government.’

“Such testimonies to the Good Samaritan work of that almoner of the American people—our noble Sanitary Commission—might be multiplied indefinitely, but it is unreasonable to suppose that any citizen of the United States can be ignorant of the achievements of this colossal volunteer association, which the nations of Europe are now seeking to emulate. All Americans must be more or less acquainted with the untiring labours of love of the Commission in camp, and hospitals, and field, and in the very trenches themselves; strange is it, therefore, that no earnest movement has hitherto been organized by our countrymen in England to aid and encourage their fellow-citizens across the Atlantic in so liberal and colossal a work. This is a duty which we owe to our country in her hour of danger, battle and death;—a duty forced upon us by every consideration of humanity—a duty to whose imperative calls no reflecting man can turn a deaf ear, whatever opinion he may entertain of the origin and object of this contest. Men, Americans, lie sick and wounded by tens of thousands; and while our fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, are holding forth to them the hand of consolation and assistance, is it right for us to remain idle and apathetic? The tangible monetary aid that we in England can render, may be a mere drop in the mighty stream of benevolence which flows unceasingly to the weary, agonized soldier from every city, town and village, in our suffering country: but the heartfelt word of encouragement, the ‘God-speed-you’ from a foreign shore, the recognition from afar off, of so much dauntless courage and unexampled fortitude, will soothe many an aching brow, and nerve the charitable of our land to yet nobler and more gigantic exertions in the future.

“Shall not this encouragement be given? Must it longer be charged upon us that Americans in England are self-otra-

cized from the noble instincts and impulses which have led our countrymen at home to organize a movement the like of which the Old World has never attempted until America set the example, and proved the work possible?

“Such a work on our part requires skill in organization, for the isolated efforts of individuals are seldom permanent, or successful in their effect. The opportunity is now before us, and if one and all will embrace it, Americans in England may quickly range themselves side by side with their fellow-citizens at home in this glorious and christian work of humanity.

“With the approval, and under the auspices of the Executive Committee of the Commission, suitable rooms have been taken in this city, where American residents and visitors may henceforward meet together as ‘The English Branch in aid of the United States Sanitary Commission.’ The rooms in question are situated on the first floor of the house, No. 21, Cockspur Street, Trafalgar Square; and the design is to make them a place of favourite resort of our countrymen, whether resident in, or merely passing through the metropolis. Regular files of the principal newspapers in the Union—East, West and South—are kept in the Reading Room, as well as the leading English daily and weekly journals; maps of the United States Coast Survey, cover the walls; a Directory is kept, in which all Americans are requested to inscribe their names and present (and, if possible, prospective) addresses; whilst the Secretary will ever be ready to afford information of a general character to strangers and others seeking it. Political discussions of whatever nature, will be strictly prohibited in the establishment, for the purposes and work of the Commission being purely benevolent, peaceful and catholic, all differences of individual opinion must here give place to the nobler feelings of a common humanity.

“Your presence and co-operation are respectfully and most earnestly solicited in furtherance of this object. You will thus have the proud satisfaction of being recognised as one of the founders of an institution which will henceforth be regarded as the Head Quarters of American citizens in England.

“I am, Sir, yours very obediently,

“E. C. FISHER,

“*Agent, English Branch, United States Sanitary Commission.*”



A copy of this circular was forwarded not merely to all Americans known to be in the United Kingdom, whether as visitors or residents, but likewise to such public men amongst Englishmen as had not bowed the knee to the Baal of slavery and secession. It will be borne in mind that the main object of the establishment of the English Branch, and in an equal degree, of the rooms at Cockspur Street was, to quote from Dr. Bellows' letter, "*To win a more candid judgment and a better appreciation of the Northern side, by showing the English people what sacrifices our own people have made in the cause of the army, how our men, and especially our women, have laboured to uphold the struggle; what enlightened care and mercy have been extended to the sick, and what extraordinary powers of accommodation and efficiency our popular institutions have shown in meeting the vast demands of an army of over a million of men, subject to the perils of a Southern climate and to such a desperate foe.*" In short, the object of the Branch in London was to convince Englishmen of the strength of democratic or popular institutions under the ordeal of a more terrible trial than any other country had hitherto experienced; and, without regard to political considerations, except in so far as they might be obvious deductions from the operations of the Commission and similar agencies, to prove to the people of England that "the Republican bubble had" *not* "burst." Circulars were therefore sent to leading

men throughout the United Kingdom, and the result was frequent visits to the rooms of the Commission from eminent characters in the political, philanthropic and scientific worlds, and an immense increase of correspondence which severely taxed the strength of the Secretary. The mere labour of forwarding the publications of the Commission was greater than anybody could have anticipated; but the result was soon observable in the altered tone of many of the English papers, and in constantly increasing demands for additional information by public characters.

The Commission soon became generally known throughout the country, and it was little surprising therefore that such a body as the Social Science Association should desire to have some succinct statement laid before them as to its objects and organization. Mr. Fisher had the honour of being invited to read a paper on the question before the Social Science Congress, held in the city of York during the month of September, 1864, and he gladly availed himself of this opportunity to make more public than ever the principles and labours of the body he represented. Amongst those present on the occasion in question were Robert Rawlinson, Esq., the Government Engineer; Dr. Lankester, the Coroner of the City of London; Professor Chadwick, Sir Charles Hastings, Edward Baines, Esq., M.P., and Dr. North. Mr. Fisher's address was necessarily short, but it was listened to



with marked attention by the distinguished audience attending the Congress. The conclusion of the paper was as follows:—

“The Sanitary Commission has solved a question which is still an enigma to other nations, for it has proved by three years of colossal labours that military discipline, and voluntary philanthropy can exist side by side, and work together harmoniously for the exceeding benefit of the army.

“The establishment, organization, magnitude and achievements of the Sanitary Commission prove three things:—

“**FIRSTLY**—The armies of a nation can be rendered incomparably more efficient by the volunteer aid and assistance of the people—without the slightest infringement of military discipline, or interference with the constituted medical authorities of armies.

“**SECONDLY**,—The American Civil War affords the brightest precedent of spontaneous and yet organized benevolence, and furnishes an example which other nations will do well to emulate.

“**THIRDLY**,—The whole of the American people—men, women, and children alike—in thus rendering their armies efficient, prove conclusively that the war is not carried on—as many in Europe suppose—by the Government of a minority, but is waged by the great mass of the citizens themselves. In no other way can you explain the colossal achievements of this Volunteer Commission.”

At the conclusion of the paper, Dr. Lankester, Coroner of the City of London, made the following remarks upon it:—

“The paper just read by Mr. Fisher is an important contribution to the cause of social science. It shows how a great nation by sympathy with its soldiers in the midst of a gigantic war, could ameliorate its horrors, and mitigate its severity. I have watched with great pleasure the proceedings of the United States Sanitary Commission of America, and feel it is well worthy of imitation in Europe; for the claims of sufferers in war are far greater than those who suffer at home.”

Dr. Lankester concluded his remarks by observing that he was glad so distinguished a thinker and political economist as John Stuart Mill, Esq., should come forward to support with his authority the example of this Commission.

Within a few weeks of the delivery of this address, the Agent of the Commission was honoured with a request from the Royal United Service Institution to lecture before that important Association on the following subject, "The working of the United States Sanitary Commission with regard to armies in the field." Probably no fact could better prove the utility of such an auxiliary as the English Branch than a request from so high and influential a quarter, for the Queen herself is the Patron of the Royal United Service Institution, the King of the Belgians, the Prince of Wales, and the Duke of Cambridge are Vice-Patrons, and the most eminent statesmen, generals, and admirals of the empire are on the list of its Vice-Presidents and the Council. The address was delivered before the Institution on Friday, February 10th, 1865, and the following extracts will serve to give an idea of some of the points dilated upon by the Agent—

"The Sanitary Commission of the United States may be said to have inaugurated a new era in the history of war. It has linked the volunteer philanthropy of the people to the unavoidable exclusiveness and stringent discipline of the army, and proved to the world at large, that even women and children may largely add to the effectiveness of the soldier,



thereby increasing the probabilities of victory. This self-organized association the offspring of the women of America, tutored by ministers of the Gospel and philanthropists, directed and supported by private enterprize and skill alone—has unceasingly supplemented the medical service of the American army during nearly four years, compelling one of the principal surgeons to declare—‘ We could not do without the Sanitary Commission.’ Such is the language of the Medical Inspector of the Army of the Potomac, and I fear to commit no exaggeration in asserting—aside even from such high official authority—that whatever success may have attended the Federal arms during this long and fearful struggle, is due in large measure to the untiring exertions, sound judgment and liberality of this volunteer commission.”

The above was the opening paragraph of the address, and the lecturer then proceeded to give, during the space of one hour, a succinct idea of the purposes, organization, and labours of the Commission. The speaker concluded as follows:—

“Its work is absolutely Samaritan, and has obtained the warm approval of the Confederate surgeons and military authorities; but whilst recognising the philanthropy of its labours, it must not be forgotten that the reason of the Commission’s existence, and the cause of its support by the nation at large, are due to its increasing the strength and efficiency of the national forces. The Sanitary Commission of the United States Army has educated the people to the requirements of the war, and forced the entire nation to interest itself in the well-being of the soldier. The army has been a *lever* resting on a *fulcrum*—the Government at Washington; but the women, and children, and men in the far-away homes of the North, have been the *power* manœuvring the *lever*. The Sanitary Commission has, in fine, disciplined and instructed the whole people, and enlisted every man, woman and child, in the military service of the country.”

When the lecturer resumed his seat, the following remarks were made by the Chairman, Lieut.-Colonel St. Leger Alcock, one of the Vice-presidents of the Institution, and Major Sir Harry Verney, brother-in-law of Miss Florence Nightingale.

“The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, it is only at our Evening Meetings that discussions are allowed; consequently on the present occasion, I am sorry to say, no questions can be asked, nor any observations made which would give rise to discussion. It is our custom, however, upon these occasions to thank the Lecturer for his kindness, and if any gentlemen present is inclined to move that vote of thanks, it will give an opportunity for expressing his opinions upon the general subject of the paper, which I think is one of the most important that, to my knowledge, has ever been brought under our notice within the walls of this theatre.

“Sir HARRY VERNEY, Bart., M.P.: Mr. Chairman, I take the liberty of profiting by the permission which you have given, to propose a vote of thanks to Mr. Fisher for the very interesting lecture which he has been so good as to communicate to us. Before I go further, I will say that I shall take the earliest opportunity of informing Miss Nightingale of the notice which Mr. Fisher has taken of her labours. I know that they have been instrumental in forwarding the cause of humanity in the armies of the United States. This is a kind of rivalry in which all of us can with great joy and satisfaction unite, viz., who shall be the first in the cause of humanity? who shall do the most to prevent the horrors of war afflicting more than is absolutely necessary those who are exposed to them? and in endeavouring, as far as possible, to communicate to each other all the information we are able to obtain, so that the armies of each nation may benefit by the experience of the other. We Englishmen must feel gratified to know that the cause of humanity in the armies of the Federals and the Confederates has been advanced by our own experience in the Crimean and other wars; and if we in return are enabled to benefit by the experience now being gained by the Army Sanitary Commis-



sion in the United States, I am sure it will be a source of satisfaction to us, as it will be to our brethren in America. The points upon which the Lecturer has touched are most interesting and important. I cannot help hoping that the lecture, which has been so eloquent, and communicated in such an interesting way, may be printed, so that we all may derive the fullest benefit from it. It seems to me a pity, when a lecture is read in this Institution, the details of which we can only remember very cursorily, that we should not have the opportunity of studying it at our leisure, and gathering from it all the lessons which the information contained is calculated to convey to us. Therefore, I venture to hope that Mr. Fisher will consent to the lecture being printed. With regard to the extraordinary fact of the benefit of sanitary arrangements, I am reminded of that which is probably known to the Lecturer, that the mortality of our Guards has diminished from fifteen per thousand to seven per thousand in the course of a very few years, in consequence of the sanitary arrangements that have been carried out in the army. And whereas our army in the Crimea lost more men, probably, than any army we ever sent abroad, I believe it is the fact that our army in the last expedition to China lost less ; indeed, I have been assured that the health of our army while in China was better than the health of the same number of men in this country. That result I believe to be entirely owing to the admirable sanitary arrangements which are now carried out and which were adopted in consequence of the disasters that we suffered in the Crimean war. Those who desire the welfare of our army must, I am sure, wish that those disasters should be ever present to our minds ; for I confess I should view with great regret any relaxation of the efforts which have been made to improve the sanitary condition of the soldier. My firm conviction is that there is no subject to which the attention of Parliament is given with greater satisfaction and greater earnestness, than that of providing for the welfare of our soldiers and sailors. I believe there is no course more economically wise, even if we were to put the matter upon that low principle, the saving of money, than to take every measure by which the health and

welfare of our soldiers and sailors may be promoted, so as to make them what they ought to be, models of good health and good conduct. For my part I shall never be satisfied with regard to the character of our sailors and soldiers, until I hear of an old soldier or an old sailor returning to his native village the best conducted man there, and being welcomed by his neighbours as the most valuable acquisition that can be brought into their community. A great deal has been done in that direction, but a great deal more remains to be done ; and I believe, by the exertions of those who are at present at the head of our army and navy carrying into effect the wishes of the country upon the subject, that much more will be effected. I take the liberty of proposing that we return our sincere thanks to Mr. Fisher, and I beg to assure him that we heartily desire to express our good will to that great country from which he comes ; and our earnest hope that the present war which now afflicts the country may cease, and that the inhabitants of America, as well as our country, may remain on the best terms and cultivate the arts of peace.

“ The CHAIRMAN: Sir Harry Verney has mentioned the advantages which will arise from the printing of Mr. Fisher’s paper, and to these I may add my belief that it will be of considerable interest abroad, where so much attention has been given to the subject, particularly at Geneva. M. Henri Dunant has written a work entitled ‘ *Un Souvenir de Solferino*,’ a very touching book, which must be very well known to many gentlemen present. M. Dunant originated the meeting in that city which gave rise to the ‘ *Conférence Internationale de Genève pour étudier les moyens de pourvoir à l’insuffisance du service sanitaire dans les armées en campagne*.’ The documents connected with this movement have been sent to this Institution, and are now in the library, and since the announcement of the present lecture, one or two foreign newspapers have been sent to me containing articles upon the subject. I only regret that they have not been put into the hands of some gentleman more competent to speak upon the subject. The papers allude to the nationalisation of the hospitals of armies in the field. This, among others, was the object of



the meeting at Geneva. Many of the Powers of Europe have given their adhesion to the proposal. The Emperor of the French especially did so, and I have been told that within the last fortnight the Government of this country has done the same. For this there exists a very good precedent, because it will be in the minds of many present, that at the battle of Dettingen, George II. confided to the Duc de Noailles his wounded, and subsequently Lord Stair, in writing to the Duc de Noailles to say that he had liberated the whole of the French prisoners, thanked the Duke for the care that had been taken of the English wounded, saying, 'Such generosity softens the rigours of war, and does honour to humanity.' This appears to have given rise to a treaty between Lord Stair and the Duc de Noailles. I believe in the Seven Years' War a similar treaty existed. I have taken the liberty of mentioning these instances, because they appear to be of much interest. I only regret that the supplementing by voluntary aid, the sanitary service of armies in the field, will not be introduced at an evening meeting, to afford an opportunity for the discussion of that subject. I will conclude by reverting for a moment to the war of the Austrian Succession. I believe it was upon that occasion that Prince Eugène said that 100,000 men would be a better guarantee than 100,000 treaties. We now have an exception to this rule, for I think one treaty in favour of humanity will be more efficacious than the force of 100,000 men. I have now the pleasing duty to perform, of conveying to Mr. Fisher the thanks of this meeting for a most important and a most interesting lecture.

"MR. FISHER: Allow me to thank you, in the first place, for your friendly feeling in asking me to lecture on the subject. As a stranger, and yet not a stranger, for I trust that we in America feel that we are one with you, I must say that I feel honoured on behalf of the United States Sanitary Commission by the courtesy which has been extended to me by the invitation to lecture here; and I feel greatly honoured by your kindness in listening so attentively, and deeply gratified by the endorsement that you have put, not on American work, but on humanitarian work. In the name of common humanity, I tender you my thanks."

This lecture of the Commission's Agent was published *in extenso* in the Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, last July.

While thus furthering the design of the patriotic Executive Committee in the United States by leading Englishmen to form a just opinion of American labours and sacrifices, the Agent did not lose sight of the claims which the Commission possessed upon Americans in England. On New Year's Day, 1865, he forwarded the following circular to all his countrymen known to be in the United Kingdom, reprinting in it the "Appeal of the Sanitary Commission to the people of the United States, and especially to the Churches."

"SIR,—In the name of our country and humanity, I beg of you to read the following appeal from the Executive Committee of the Sanitary Commission, and to ask yourself whether so noble an institution must be compelled to curtail or terminate its Samaritan work for want of that aid which we might render it.

(Here followed the Appeal.)

"Far removed as we are from the anxieties and sufferings now racking our country, with none of those continual and increasing calls upon our patriotism which force themselves upon the attention of Americans at home, it is assuredly our duty to exert ourselves even more than they in supporting a work which has wrung loud encomiums from European nations. Does not the bright example of California reproach us for our apathy?

"Whilst the English people are becoming daily more sensible to the magnitude and beneficence of the Commission's labours, the London and Provincial Press teeming with commendatory notices of its work, the most influential and prominent public men of Great Britain, the medical profession,



and officers of high rank in the army and navy, all vying with each other in investigating the Commission's operations and applauding its success, we Americans in England have strangely held aloof from sustaining an institution which reflects unparalleled glory upon our country. Must this ungenerous apathy continue? Shall it hereafter be recorded that when our glorious Union was racked and torn by fratricidal hands, loyal Americans calmly looked on, callously indifferent to so much suffering and heroism?

"In the name of the Sanitary Commission, I invoke your favourable response to this appeal. A visit to these rooms will convince you of the advantages which have arisen from the establishment of this Branch; advantages which will be immeasurably increased if you and others will emulate the glorious example of our brethren at home, by earnestly supporting a work which has placed America in the foremost rank of charity, religion, and humanity.

"I am, Sir, yours most sincerely,

"E. C. FISHER, *Agent.*

"*United States Sanitary Commission (English Branch),*

"*21, Cockspur Street, London. New Year's Day, 1865.*"

This circular had the desired result, the parties to whom it was addressed preferring, however, to forward their contributions direct to the Commission in America, instead of the English Branch.\* This action on their part may account for the monetary success of the London establishment not being so startling as might have been expected from the number of Americans resident or visiting in England.

The success of the Branch, *in a moral point of view*, may be best appreciated by the numerous and enthusiastic letters addressed to the Secretary by

\* The list of subscriptions will be found in the Appendix.

eminent Englishmen. The documents of the Commission were literally distributed by thousands throughout the United Kingdom, scarcely a man of eminence or an institution of importance failing to receive and to acknowledge the freely offered gift. A single example will suffice to prove the effect of this general distribution of the Commission's publications as well as the immediate and pointed result produced upon English public opinion. A noble Marquis, formerly well-known for his strong advocacy of Confederate claims and interests, delivered a speech in the North of England, towards the close of 1864, which excited much comment at the time. The Agent of the Commission thereupon forwarded him a set of documents, and received from his Lordship a courteous reply, of which the following is an extract:

"I am much obliged to you for sending me the two works published by the United States Sanitary Commission. I have been reading this morning the account of the treatment of prisoners ('Narrative of Sufferings in Rebel Military Prisons.') The Confederate version is just the opposite, but certainly the evidence adduced by the United States Commissioners is very strong."

The English Branch has added considerably to the vast amount of documents which have been published under the auspices and in the interest of the United States Sanitary Commission. The list may be given as follows:—



A WOMAN'S EXAMPLE AND A NATION'S WORK. This pamphlet of fifty pages has been translated in French, German, and other Continental languages, and many thousands distributed both in Europe and America.

MILITARY DISCIPLINE AND VOLUNTEER PHILANTHROPY. An Address delivered before the Social Science Congress at York, in 1864.

THE SANITARY COMMISSION OF THE UNITED STATES. Reprinted from the *Daily News*.

TREATMENT OF NORTHERN SOLDIERS IN REBEL MILITARY PRISONS. An Abridgement by the Secretary.

To the above may be added, THE WORK OF THE UNITED STATES SANITARY COMMISSION WITH REGARD TO ARMIES IN THE FIELD, published by the Royal United Service Institution from the Address delivered before it by the Commission's agent. AMERICA AND HER ARMIES, an admirable record of the labours of the Sanitary and kindred Commissions, by an eminent Glasgow merchant.

#### CONCLUSION.

The English Branch of the United States Sanitary Commission has accomplished the design of its founders, namely, "To interest Americans in England in the welfare of those fighting for our national integrity," and especially in winning "the sympathy of England for the loyal side in this struggle."

It has given to the English nation at large a thorough knowledge of the objects for which the North was fighting, of the sacrifices made by men

and women alike on the altar of patriotism, of the resources of the Free States, and the expansibility of our institutions. It has followed the enemies of the Union into the *salons* of England's aristocracy, disproved their assertions by irrefutable facts, and won back the sympathy of Englishmen to the cause of free government and the requirements of law. The English Branch, in fine, has been a missionary, a schoolmaster, during the past eighteen months, unceasingly instilling into the minds of Englishmen the lessons of our struggle, and gaining their respect and admiration by the story of our sacrifices, self-denial and humanity.

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579  
APPENDIX.

Principal Subscriptions received by the English Branch in  
behalf of the United States Sanitary Commission.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Mr. Joshua Bates . .	1000	0	0	Mr. Daniel James . .	50	0	0
„ James McHenry .	1000	0	0	„ E. J. Coates . .	50	0	0
„ Elliott (proceeds of 1000 tons of coals, say) . . . .	1000	0	0	„ James Spence . .	50	0	0
Messrs. J. & P. Coates	250	0	0	„ George Warren . .	50	0	0
Mr. C. M. Lampson .	250	0	0	„ Henry Van Wart .	50	0	0
„ J. L. Z. Benzon .	200	0	0	Hon. F. H. Morse . .	20	0	0
His Excellency Charles F. Adams . . .	100	0	0	Mr. J. W. Marshall .	20	0	0
Mr. B. T. Babcock .	100	0	0	„ Benjamin Moran .	10	0	0
„ S. H. Brown . .	100	0	0	„ Robert Shinn . .	10	0	0
„ S. B. Guion . .	100	0	0	„ Cyrus W. Field . .	10	0	0
„ H. W. Gair . .	100	0	0	„ R. Hunting . . .	10	0	0
				„ H. Starr . . . .	10	0	0
				„ J. G. Avery . . .	10	0	0
				„ E. C. Fisher . . .	10	0	0

Besides a number of small subscriptions amounting in the aggregate to about £100.

In addition to the above amounts of £4560 which have past through the English Branch, many donations of clothing, books, oil paintings, and other valuables have been forwarded by means of this Agency, the whole being roughly estimated at about £3000. When it is remembered that the majority of Americans in the United Kingdom have preferred to send their subscriptions direct to head-quarters, or have forwarded them through their agents in New York and other cities, it will certainly be admitted that, *in a mere monetary point of view*, the Sanitary Commission were fully justified by the result in establishing the English Branch.

THE END.

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627